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instructiveness, this collection of facsimiles has the merit of being a thing of beauty over which it is a pleasure to linger. Mr. Hyatt, the skilful photo-engraver, to whose enterprise the appearance of Dr. Ginsburg's book is due, is to be congratulated on his artistic work. It is to be hoped that its success will be such as to encourage him to issue further reproductions of Hebrew MSS.

ISIDORE HARRIS.

### FELSENTHAL'S "JEWISH QUESTIONS."

*Jüdische Fragen: Beiträge zur Klärung derselben* von Dr. B. FELSENTHAL, Rabbiner der Ziongemeinde in Chicago. (Chicago: Koelling and Klappenbach, 1896.)

IN the present period of transition in religious thought, it is vitally important to distinguish between the permanent and the transitory elements in Judaism. The pamphlet under review, written by a representative American Rabbi, attacks this problem, and endeavours to extract from Judaism those dogmas which are fundamental and destined to survive all processes of disintegration.

The fallacy that Judaism is bound by no metaphysical laws has been exploded by Mr. Schechter in his essay on *The Dogmas of Judaism*, but so far little has been done towards elucidating what articles of Jewish belief, varying as they do according to the individual believer, must without reserve be accepted by those who wish to remain within the pale of Judaism. Micah's famous definition of religion—to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with God—may indeed be said still to be the essence and the ruling element of Judaism. But has not this summary of the Jewish faith become too vague, when, happily, here is no lack of the good and pious among all creeds? The Jewish belief in an ethical monotheism has spread far and wide beyond the confines of Israel, and has to a great extent ceased to be a peculiarly Jewish doctrine.

What are, therefore, the distinguishing dogmas which divide Judaism from other monotheistic religions?

Dr. Felsenthal, in raising this point, contends that we cannot at all speak of the dogmas of Judaism as formulated once and for ever and admitting of no expansion and growth. Nay, further, such articles of belief as the resurrection of the dead, and as the coming of a personal Messiah of the house of David, the consequent restoration of the sacrificial system and of the civil and criminal code of the Pentateuch—doctrines which were accepted by the whole body

of Jews even until recent times, have ceased to be dogmas indissolubly connected with the Jewish creed. Nor can the fact be overlooked that the present Jewish ideas about God, the immortality of the soul, reward and punishment, are the evolution of notions, originally crude, purified and expanded during the ages of Israel's existence. Thus we can only speak of a *history* of Jewish dogmas—a history during which we may trace the rise and development, the decay and ultimate extinction of beliefs which had once occupied a dominant position among the teachings of the Synagogue.

These facts lead Dr. Felsenthal to inquire not only what the characteristics of Judaism are, but what is the spell, the watchword which unites under the same banner the various heterogeneous masses of Jews. A life under the same rules and conditions certainly formed a bond strong enough to keep together the scattered members of the same faith and race. But as this bond has been broken, which of the doctrines of the Synagogue may still claim an undisputed sway over all the sections of Judaism? There are still, asserts Dr. Felsenthal, two dogmas which may be termed Jewish from the fact that, down to the present, they have always been unanimously accepted by all Jews without distinction. With the ethical monotheistic conception of the Deity, the deep consciousness of a special purpose for which Israel was by God's grace chosen, has at all times been interwoven, and these two principles have become the basis of Judaism, broad enough to include all its divisions. Israel being a witness to God and a torchbearer of Light and Truth, it becomes the duty of every individual who wishes to share in the privileges which must needs accrue to all who labour in a cause so high and noble, to testify by his creed and deed to the life which is inspired by the God of Righteousness.

It is much to be regretted that Dr. Felsenthal did not maintain the doctrine of a divine revelation to man as being part and parcel of Judaism. This apparent neglect of revelation seems to me fraught with grave danger.

Discussing the question whether the Jews are to be regarded as a people or simply as a religious community, Dr. Felsenthal says that the Jews are in the first place a race, and Judaism is not merely the religion of the Jews, but a combination of all the psychological peculiarities of the Jewish race.

The fulfilment of Israel's duty to the world has become a subject of great importance amongst the Jews of America. The doors of the Synagogue have been widely opened for those who wish to enter, and the bars that have hitherto obstructed the admission of strangers have been removed. But any attempts to go further than this, any

amalgamation with non-Jewish forms of religion, not only seem premature, but undesirable. How beneficial, on the other hand, would be an alliance between American and English Jews! While the Jews of England would greatly gain in participating in the large output of the religious literature of America, Americans, by their hearty appreciation of English scholars, have in an unmistakable manner shown how keenly they would welcome an active interchange of thought. Thus, perhaps, would the complicated problem how Judaism might exercise a religious influence on the world, in regard to which Dr. Felsenthal expresses such grave apprehensions, be brought nearer solution by the combined efforts of both countries.

PAUL GOODMAN.